

*Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2023*

**Remarks Honoring the 2022 World Series Champion Houston Astros**

*August 7, 2023*

*The President.* Thank you, thank you, thank you. Please, have a seat.

*Audience member.* We love you!

*The President.* Well, thank you. My name is Joe Biden. I play center field. *[Laughter]* At least I used to——

*Audience member.* We love you, Joe!

*The President.* At least I used to play center field. *[Laughter]*

Well, I'll tell you what: If you gave me a choice of standing here or on that riser, I'm not sure which I'd pick. *[Laughter]*

Welcome, guys. Welcome, welcome, welcome, welcome. And I want to welcome to the White House the 2022 World Series Champions, the Houston Astros.

From team owner Jim Crane to manager Dusty Baker—a name known to many of you—to the players and everyone in the organization, it's great to have you here. It really is great to have you here.

And it's great to see so many of your fans, including the Second Gentleman and Representative Al Green—Randall Weber. Where—where's Al? Is Al here? There you are. I'm making sure I can see you, Al. I—because, I know, if I don't—see, if he doesn't see me, that cane hurts. *[Laughter]*

*Representative Alexander N. Green.* We'll be back next year, Mr. President.

*The President.* And Randall Weber—where is Randall?

*Audience member.* Right here.

*The President.* Oh, there you go, Randall. *[Inaudible]*

*Representative Randy K. Weber, Sr.* We will be back next year. *[Inaudible]*

*The President.* I tell you—and if you want anybody, you want Sheila Jackson Lee on your team because you don't want to be on the opposite side of her.

*Representative Shelia Jackson Lee.* *[Inaudible]*

*The President.* You're playing every minute, I tell you. Look—who has the distinction of representing Minute Maid Park, home of the Astros, by the way.

The Houston Astros: legends of Space City. The legends of Space City. Now, you know, a hundred years from now, they'll wonder what the hell that was: the Space City. *[Laughter]*

A hundred and six regular season wins, the best American League in the season—the best season in the—of the—in the American League. Twenty-one shutouts of opposing teams, the most in the entire league, including the postseason.

Swept the Mariners, the Yankees in the American League playoffs. And then, although I love these guys, this next part is hard to say—*[laughter]*—then they beat the Phillies in six games to win the World Series. Now, you all realize that means I can't go back to Philly, you know. *[Laughter]* Oh, I kid.

Look, led by World Series MVP—where is Jeremy? Jeremy—raise your hand so everybody sees you—Peña. The first rookie position player to earn the honor. First—first, first. Led by five All-Stars, as well as a group of pitchers who pitched the first combined no-hitter in postseason history.

And you guys just weren't satisfied winning the World Series, man, you had to break every record.

I tell you, remarkable achievements led by—and this is not hyperbole—the legendary Dusty Baker. Worst part about it is, I remember rooting for him as a kid, and I was older than he was. *[Laughter]* Geez.

*[At this point, the President made the sign of the cross.]*

*[Laughter]* Dusty, it wasn't easy. People counted you out, saying you were past your prime. Hell, I know something about that. *[Laughter]* I know something about that. *[Laughter]*

Dusty, a former marine and a man of faith who has never given up, with a record to prove it. An All-Star player, three-time—three-time—Manager of the Year, the first coach to lead five teams to postseason in all of baseball history, and finally, World Series champion as a player and a manager.

There were plenty of folks rooting for the Astros, but the whole country was rooting for Dusty Baker, I promise you that. The whole country.

Look, and this team didn't just step up on the field, you stepped up for the community. I think I was mentioning this to the guys a little—a few minutes earlier. You focused on issues that are near and dear to my heart—I mean that sincerely—like raising awareness on domestic violence.

You know, I spent a lot of my career writing the Violence Against Women Act. I think the only—my dad used to have an expression that the idea—the idea—that the abuse of power—any man that raised his hand to a woman is just a frigging coward.

And you know, your support for kids with cancer. Me and my family and many families in America, that cuts very personally. And we started up the Biden Cancer Initiative and the Cancer Moonshot. We brought researchers, nonprofits, advocates, patients to end cancer as we know it, including pediatric cancer, which is often not researched.

You know, then, during terrible winter of 2021, you stepped up helping those most in need. And it matters. Don't under estimate it, guys. It's an American thing to do. You showed up for the people of Uvalde when they needed it most. I spent a lot of time in Uvalde, met every single family. I made sure I met every single, solitary family and spent time with them.

And I don't know——

*[The President gestured toward the teleprompter.]*

You know, I don't know what they're doing with that machine. I mean, they're just rolling along here.

But the point is, the—you know, I think you athletes underestimate how much hope you give. Not a joke. I'm not being—this is not hyperbole. I give you my word.

Every one of those kids—and when you guys decided—the men who decided to roll up and take 300 of these kids and their families to the ballgame, it gave them a little bit of hope.

Well, some of you have suffered loss in your life. You understand it. It's astounding what you do. I really mean it. And it meant a great deal. I—one of the reasons why I like you guys so

damn much. You know, the community was devastated. And you guys—my dad used to say, "Half of winning is showing up." You showed up.

You spent time with the surviving students. You gave them hope. You played ball in the park with them. You signed jerseys with their names of the children that were lost on it. I mean, it really—it validates in ways I don't think you really understand.

You hosted a "Uvalde Storm Day"—"Strong Day." And, as I said, 3,000 Uvalde residents—provided buses to bring them to the game. You guys are the real deal.

And the victim's sister, Faith Mata, whose sister Tess was killed, threw out the ceremonial first pitch. Imagine what it was like for her standing on that mound—or standing near it. Imagine what it was like and what it did. It really matters, I promise you. I promise you.

And this team said to the community that day: "You're family. You're neighbors. We want to do whatever we can to help you get through this process. And if it's just a smile on a Sunday for our game, that's what we want to do." That's what you did. You did a whole lot more.

Yes, sports is about winning. But it's a lot more than that. At best, it lifts people up, it brings them together, it helps them be there for each other.

I was honored to host the 2022 Houston Astros—2022 Houston Astros here at the White House.

And by the way, congratulations. *[Laughter]* I didn't bother—I didn't even say that part yet. *[Laughter]* But no—I've done a lot of these. You're an impressive group of men. I mean, you really are. From management on down—to ownership. I mean, you care.

And I—this is not part of the program here, guys, but I'll bet you, you were surprised their—it gave you heart to see the reaction that people had to those kids when you took them out on the field. It matters. So thank you, thank you, thank you.

And folks, let me end by saying God bless you all, and may God protect our troops.

Thank you, thank you.

With that, I'm going to bring out the guy—totally unknown to all of you—Jim Crane, to say a few words. *[Laughter]*

*Owner and Chairman James R. Crane.* Mr. President, First Lady, on behalf of my family—I've got most of my crew here today—and the entire——

*The President.* That James?

*Mr. Crane.* Yes, that's Big James—and the entire Houston organization, thank you for having us at—at this afternoon here. It's a great honor. And we appreciate the hospitality. The staff has been great, very welcoming. And I'd like to thank them.

And today is a special day. It's not only for the player—these great players and coaches work hard every day. But we have a lot of our people. We've got some announcers in here. I parked car with—cars with that guy when I was 16 in St. Louis.

*The President.* Oh, is that right?

*Mr. Crane.* We're still parking cars. *[Laughter]*

And so the whole organization pitches in. I don't think everybody realizes how hard everyone works, from the announcers, guys cleaning the stadium. All those jobs are very important. And it really helped us win 2022. It was a very, very—a team effort from these great players and our entire group here today. And I appreciate everybody coming up today.

We're here representing the city of Houston. We have some politicians over there we know very well. And thank you for the great support.

But we have the best fans in baseball. And we want to thank our fans. Without the fans—I tell everybody the fans pay the bills. *[Laughter]* They pay the salaries. I'm just a little conduit. *[Laughter]* And we wouldn't be here without all that support.

The other thing: We were lucky to pick off Dusty a few years ago, and Dusty has an unbelievable career. Everyone knows that. But this year, he won a World Series. He hadn't won a World Series, believe it or not.

*The President.* Played in one. *[Laughter]*

*Mr. Crane.* And I'm happy to turn it over to him. And I'm proud to have Dusty as our manager.

*Manager Johnnie B. "Dusty" Baker, Jr.* Thank you. *[Laughter]* Well, thanks, Jim. Good afternoon. And we're honored to be here today to represent the city of Houston and this organization.

President Biden, First Lady Dr. Biden, and your team, we thank you for inviting us to this celebration of our championship. These guys deserve it. And we thank you for the hospitality.

These guys standing behind me are the greatest guys that I've been around. They always believed in themselves. They always believed in themselves, prior to me even coming here, that they had the ability to win. And they show what perseverance and character can do for you.

I have these readings every day that I read. And that was about—today was perseverance. And perseverance has been, you know, the biggest part of my life. And perseverance has been the biggest part of these guys' life, or else you can't make it to the promised land like we did.

These guys, you know, were a group of veterans alongside some incredible young men who stepped into big shoes and made big plays for the biggest stage. We all know baseball is a long season, and they came to play every day. That's what we talk about all the time.

They were consistent in their personalities and confidence, and they had each other with unwavering support for each other and love for each other. I mean, I think that is probably one of the biggest things that this team has, compared to other teams that I've been in the past, is that they genuinely loved each other.

And when I asked the late Bill Russell what was the keys to the Celtics, who—whom I didn't like very well, he told me—*[laughter]*—he told me that they loved each other.

Twenty twenty-two was never about one individual. It was about a group of men coming together to accomplish something very special for this city that supported them. I love them all. You've got to love each and every one of them. And it's only a way to come together in a special feeling that is tough to describe and hard to repeat. But we play on repeating exactly that feeling.

Houston is a great city, with great people and great fans. Hands down, they're the best baseball fans in America, and we couldn't have done it without their support. I said the night we won that if we won one, we'd win two. And so now I've got to keep my word. I like keeping my word. *[Laughter]*

And we're in the middle of making it happen right now, coming off a great series in New York heading into a big series in Baltimore, probably the biggest series that Baltimore has had in a while, but—*[laughter]*. Hey, I'm known to be honest, you know. No harm intended.

And you know, thank you, Mr. President and your staff, for having us here today. It's an honor.

And I'm going to throw it back to Jim to present a special gift to Mr. President. Thank you.

*[Mr. Crane presented the President with a jersey.]*

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:59 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Douglas C. Emhoff, husband of Vice President Kamala D. Harris; Jeremy J. Peña, shortstop, Jose C. Altuve, second baseman, Yordan R. Alvarez, left fielder, Kyle D. Tucker, right fielder, and Justin B. Verlander, Framber Valdez, Cristian Javier, Bryan E. Abreu, Rafael Montero, and T. Ryan Pressly, pitchers, Major League Baseball's Houston Astros; and Faith Mata, sister of Tess Marie Mata, who was killed in the shooting at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, TX, on May 24, 2022.

*Categories:* Addresses and Remarks : 2022 World Series Champion Houston Astros.

*Locations:* Washington, DC.

*Names:* Abreu, Bryan E.; Altuve, Jose C.; Álvarez, Yordan R.; Baker, Johnnie B. "Dusty," Jr.; Crane, James R.; Emhoff, Douglas C.; Valdez, Framber; Green, Alexander N.; Jackson Lee, Sheila; Javier, Cristian; Mata, Faith; Montero, Rafael; Peña, Jeremy J.; Pressly, T. Ryan; Tucker, Kyle D.; Verlander, Justin B.; Weber, Randy K., Sr.

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